THE PORT FOLIO,

(NEW SERIES)

BY OLIVER OLDSCHOOL, ESQ.

Various, that the mind of desultory man, studious of change and pleased with novelty, may be indulged—Cowp.

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ORIGINAL PAPERS.

For The Port Folio.

TRAVELS.

LETTERS FROM GENEVA AND FRANCE.

Written during a residence of between two and three years in different parts of those countries, and addressed to a lady in Virginia.

(*Continued from page* 374.)

LETTER XXIII.

My dear E——,

THE Directory had now leisure to turn their attention to the smaller Cantons, not that they expected to find any money in either of them, but a Constitution, as they affected to call it, had been composed in Paris, and it was their fancy that all Switzerland should adopt it. These small states, in some measure deserved their fate, by the degree of insensibility with which they beheld the distress of their neighbours, whose aristocracy and insolence of wealth they were not sorry to see humbled; they were soon made to understand, however, and in no very soothing terms, that they also were to revolutionize themselves, to forego their distinct governments as states, and to be assimilated to the rest of Switzerland, under one general form, in which, the division of power and the distinctions of the magistracy, were closely copied from that emblem of all perfection, the Directorial government.

The first measures of the Cantons, who were now the object of attack, were such as deserved success, and such as deprived the Directory of every shadow of pretext for invading them; they liberated the inhabitants of the subject countries from their allegiance, and informed the French general of their having done so, but nothing short of the new constitution would avail. Had the Cantons not attacked, invested any one individual of sufficient talents and experience with full powers to direct the general

defence as he might see best, so as to prevent that shock of interest, of party spirit, and of local attachments, which embarrassed all their measures, the scenes of their earlier triumphs might have been repeated, and the French have found a grave, as the Austrians had done some centuries before, in the bosom of the Alps; it was their misfortune not to adopt this wise policy; still, however, their defence was such as became a people who had been so many ages in possession of liberty: the old and the young, the women and the children, even the clergy prepared to share the common danger, and all that patriotism and religious zeal could dictate, all that paternal influence, and the sacred love of home could effect, was, though in vain, exerted. You may see the particulars of this afflicting contest in the newspapers of the time. The Canton of Schwitz, the cradle of the nation's liberty, held out as long as there could be any hopes of success: but when their losses amounted to a hundred of their people a day, an assembly of the nation was convoked, and the last fierce struggles of expiring liberty were allayed by the soothing accents of a venerable minister; a capitulation was entered into the day following with the French general, and the people of Schwitz, having agreed for themselves and their neighbours, to lay aside their arms, and accede to the general government, the French army was withdrawn, and they were left undisturbed.

Two of the smaller members of the Helvetick Confederation have experienced a still harder fate; Bienne, a little republick at the extremity of the lake, to which Rousseau has drawn such general attention, had for ages acknowledged the very limited prerogative of the bishop of Bale, in the executive part of government, but its inhabitants were in full possession of all which constitutes the essentials of liberty and independence; as the bishop however, was, in his capacity of prince of the empire, an object of hostility to France, a French army took possession of Bienne, and has held it ever since. Another republick, whose fate will interest you, was Mulhausen, which consisted of one flourishing town, of a few villages, and of about eighteen miles square of fertile territory, upon the river Idd, in Alsace. This little state was in alliance with Switzerland, and exhibited in its government a happy mixture of aristocracy and democracy. It had been proposed to this happy, inoffensive people, at a very early period of the revolution, to unite themselves with France, and upon their refusal, their territory had been taken possession of, and their city rigorously blockaded, so as to prevent all egress and all communication with the adjacent country. The blockade lasted for two years, nor did the citizens of Mulhausen submit to be incorporated with France, until they had consumed the last day's ration of provisions which the town afforded; these they had scrupulously shared, and used in the most rigorously economical manner, and as they had long been without fuel, almost every article of furniture was converted to that use. It was a most affecting sight, says the authour of the relation which I have now before me, to perceive the people of Mulhausen bring out their furniture into the publick square, and sharing it with their fellow-citizens, that all might have the means of preparing the small pittance of a meal that they allow-

ed themselves. In the Moniteur of the day, Mulhausen is represented as having solicited to be united to France.

The weak and ill-composed government which was next in operation all over Switzerland, was such as would have left the country forever at the mercy of its powerful neighbours, still more than it is now by the act of mediation, and you may conceive how little the constitution was built upon the affections of the people, by the facility with which it yielded to the first efforts which were made against it in the year eighteen hundred and two, when some of the best and most influential characters were desirous of availing themselves of that article in the treaty of Luneville, which guaranties to the Swiss the privilege of regulating their government as they should think proper. The interference of the First Consul upon this occasion, was in violation of the most sacred engagement, but though humiliating in the greatest degree to the pride of all Switzerland, and to the feelings of its inhabitants as an independent people; it does not appear to have been attended with such injurious and degrading consequences, as might have been expected; his attachment to a form of government similar to the one which he had so lately himself overturned in France, could not be very great, and to give him his due, in that spirit of charity which our old proverb expresses, he did not seem bent upon destroying all remains of national honour among the Swiss; a new constitution was organised under the shadow of his power, and with somewhat more of a general government, than before the revolution, continually in operation, the Cantons are restored to their independence as states. Berne, indeed, is shorne of its beams, and sees two sister states arise where it once counted a race of happy subjects; but the ancient and more respectable families have come forward again, and the peasants are convinced that they were deceived, and not betrayed, and that their gallant general deserved a better fate. Zurich has been able with the assistance of its allies to repress an insurrection of discontented people. The *Pays de Vaud* has the delight of seeing itself treated as a Canton, and is as much embarrassed with its independence as your county of Albemarle would be, and the little Cantons are restored to that ancient form of internal government, which they were so much attached to; they no longer indeed possess as sovereigns, the subject districts which they once held, but at that, they ought in the true spirit of liberty, rather rejoice than not.

The last of October, found us fixed at Geneva, on the first floor of a house in the *grande Rue*, where we had a dining parlour and a kitchen, and a sufficiency of bedchambers for ourselves and servants, with house linen, and some plate, for thirteen louis a month. ———— was soon afterwards fixed at school: ———— took lessons regularly of masters who attended her. We had every reason to be satisfied with what we had done for ———, and we began to mix a little in the world.

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LETTER XXIV.

It would be useless to describe the situation of Geneva, which you ought to know from Moore and Coxe, as well almost as if you had been there; there are indeed but few cities in Europe, which have

attracted such general attention, and not one more deserving of it. A little republick, in which the departments of government were wisely and distinctly ascertained, with no more of democracy than was necessary to maintain the privileges and support the consequence of the people; with no other aristocracy than that of talents and hereditary virtue, and with such a portion of monarchy as gave vigour to the law, but which, the nation could at any time reassume; such a republick was very naturally an object of general regard: and that the semblance to the commonwealths of former times might be yet more perfect, there was a little army kept up for the defence of the state, there was a subject territory, once the property of the church or the fruit of former wars, which was to be governed by proconsuls, sent out for that purpose from the capital, there had been several seditions, more than one civil war, and several revolutions.

What nature has done for this highly favoured spot, still remains of course, and travellers will to the end of time admire the noble lake, the clear, the azure coloured rapid river, the amphitheatre of gentle hills, and the contrast of variegated vegetation, with the perpetual snow of the neighbouring Alps; but the efforts of wisdom and virtue are far less durable: still however there is something left of former times even in a moral point of view, and as in the remains of ancient temples, the foundation may still be traced, and here and there an isolated column may still command our admiration, long after the superstructure has been swept away, so in Geneva, though their independence has been torn from them, though their commercial opulence has vanished, and their manufactures have fallen to decay, yet their system of education, the basis of all their former happiness, remains: their manners are pleasing, their taste in literature is correct, and their morals are still good. It is indeed wonderful how so much remains of what Geneva was, and how under so many losses, and such humiliations, they still preserve a degree of apparent independence, a decent exteriour of comfortable circumstances, and such good spirits.

To fill the various civil, ecclesiastick, or literary offices of the republick, to be a member of some one of the councils, to be in the executive or judiciary departments, to close a military life in foreign service, by holding a commission in the army of the state, were all objects of honourable ambition, which encouraged the liberal policy of the father in giving a good education, and incited the application of the son; these objects no longer exist, but the precious habit remains, and no change in the article of literary attainments is as yet perceivable, or in the conversation and general appearance of the superiour orders of society. But the people of the inferiour class, the tradesman, the manufacturer, and the small shopkeeper have suffered by the loss of that spark of patriotism, that dignified sense of their own importance, which raised them above the paltry arts of gain, consoled them for the inequalities of fortune, and made them proud to vindicate their title of citizen of Geneva in foreign countries. Once a year at least, when assembled in the great council of the nation, they heard themselves addressed as sovereign Lords, and the Bourgeois, with his sword by his side, and his hat on, might perceive that

every magistrate bowed before him and solicited his approbation, whose shoes he had made, or whose coat he had carried home that very morning.

You would admire the gentleness with which their schools are conducted, and how powerfully the scholar's mind is incited by a much better cause than the fear of blows; there are publick examinations in all of them, and nothing is omitted, which can give importance to the prizes that are distributed on those occasions; the examination which a schoolboy or student undergoes, is an epoch of no small importance in the family, his parents think of little else for some days, but of the appearance he will make, or of the glory he has gained, his little brothers and sisters are deeply interested in the event, and the very servant-maid who waits at supper is proud of his success. The education of the daughters is equally well attended to, with this difference, that it is never but in a very small degree publick, and is confined to modern literature, and to the more elegant accomplishments, among which the making of artificial flowers, cutting paper for profiles, and some other as trifling accomplishments are frequently included; religious instruction, very properly, also occupies a portion of time of both sexes, as preparatory to the first communion. All are passionately fond of dancing, and their parents indulge them in that, and in every other amusement, suitable to their age, so that one can nowhere meet with a more general appearance of happiness than here; Mahomet may have been right in placing the Paradise of sensual man in fragrant bowers, by the side of purling streams, and amid never-fading beauties, but we may say without exaggeration, that Heaven has placed a Paradise for the young and innocent in Geneva; the style of dancing is such as accommodates itself better to the common English country-dance, than that of the best masters in Charleston does, but they have given into the rage for the waltz, and I confess to my great astonishment.

I should be tempted, I think, were I to see a daughter of mine dancing one, to act like the father in the Spectator on a similar occasion, and I acknowledge, that it requires my full and perfect recollection of Gibbon's observation on the errour into which a Greek traveller had fallen, who visited England in the reign of Henry the IVth, not to deviate in some uncharitable reflection on the subject of these waltz; I will tell you hereafter the observation which they suggested to an Italian lady.

POLITE LITERATURE.

LETTERS FROM BRUTUS.

LETTER IX.

To His Grace, the Duke of Portland.

My Lord,

Amid the violence of political contest to which this country is subject, men are too generally measured, whether in praise or blame, by the standard of their party. A unity of party comes in place of a unity of character, and a warm and blind attachment to a particular set of measures, or rather to a particular junto of men, is held to be the Catholick virtue of the statesman and politician.

But though in the circles of political cabal this doctrine is commonly allowed, the people at large make distinctions somewhat beyond it.—They form an estimate of individuals separately from the side to which they belong, and repose on private worth a confidence of a firmer kind

than that which depends on the general complexion of a party.

It must flatter your Grace to be told, that such has been hitherto the estimation of your character with the publick; that the general opinion marked you out for one, on whose virtue we might rely, as a security against his doing anything, either in opposition or in power, unworthy of a good man. It happened, indeed unfortunately, that some of that party, with whom you was connected, required such a surety; that, like other rich sureties, you risked your reputation in alliance with their want of it. It is in reputation as in money; there is an absolute bankruptcy, an advantage of which profligate men avail themselves. Having nothing else to lose, they set deeper stakes, and play bolder strokes than men of property and credit; and when such strokes are successful, the world is too apt to forget the profligacy of the adventure in its good fortune. In one instance, too striking to be soon forgotten, the country narrowly escaped a situation in which an attempt of this sort might have succeeded—but we recollect, my Lord, that even in the situation we feared, it would *not* have succeeded; that the integrity and the honour of the Duke of Portland would have prevented it.

Thus, impressed with a sense of respect and gratitude to his name, he will not wonder at our surprise and disappointment on seeing it lately included in an instrument which it was impossible not to feel as a publick national disgrace. There is something in the very nature of a money transaction, which makes one always desirous to manage it with privacy and delicacy. It is like some other humiliating necessities of our condition, which we submit to with reluctance, and wish neither to be seen nor remembered; like these too, the propriety of its delicate management is increased in proportion to the rank of the parties. There is often magnificence in the spending of money; but the borrowing of it is always a paltry sort of business, to which the imagination cannot annex any idea of sublimity, unless indeed it might trace a distant one in the ruin of the lenders. There are authours of your Grace's acquaintance who can afford examples of the sublime in this way.

But the matter is serious, my Lord, and I will not indulge myself further in any parenthesis of fancy. I speak with the regret of a fellow-citizen; others will question you with the triumph of an enemy. They will ask if it became your Grace, and your confederates in this business, to be parties to a deed which carried the second name in the empire to a market of foreign Jews; to supplicate a loan, and mortgage for the security part of the realm of England; to open a subscription like those for a family in distress, and to copy the features of the transaction from the most hackneyed of such precedents; to take up money which was to be reimbursed by way of *Lottery*, the trick of strolling pedlers, and bankrupt dealers in smallware. But I spare my countrymen so mortifying a detail. They will blush to read it even here; but what will be their feelings, when they think of such a paper being stuck up in Flemish alehouses, and conned over by every little shopkeeper of Antwerp, who can muster up a thousand guilders, for the vanity of being a creditor to the heir of Great-Britain. The statutes have not made it treason to imagine the death of the Prince of Wales; but there is something more humiliating, though it may not be so punishable as treason, in weighing his life against the fears of a Jew, and the calculations of a money-broker.

But the courteous maxims of our constitution are more extensive than our penal laws. Neither these, nor indeed the nature of the transaction, will allow us to believe that the illustrious personages themselves "can have done this wrong." It must have been the invention of some mean and desperate spendthrift, accustomed to such shifts, and insensible to their ignominy. Noble natures are often easy in proportion to their nobleness, and for youth and inexperience there

is an additional apology; but we must stretch our indulgence far, to pardon the allowance or participation of such a business to the Dukes of P——— and N———, to Earl F——— and Lord S———. We blame but slightly Mess. E——— and P———. They are *official* to the P———; and professional indifference of this sort, the "iras et verba locant" may excuse a lawyer; but you, my Lord, and your noble cotrustees, have neither the apology of habit, nor the inducement of a fee, for "letting out" your character.

To such men the country looked for protection, if any circumstances should happen (and at one time its fears had anticipated such circumstances) in which their protection might be necessary. Had not the glaring evidence of every newspaper prevented it, the fears of that former period would have guided our belief in the present, and we should have filled up the trustees in this deed accordingly. With the Dukedom of C——— and the Bishoprick of O——— any trustees might have served; unless, indeed, the names to which I allude, like the *negative quantities* in Algebra, had subtracted from the solidity of pledges so valuable. Consistency of character is a natural criticism in morals, as in poetry. There are names which we could have seen in such a paper, with the degree of ill-natured satisfaction which arises from this consistency, and we should have given their owners that sort of credit for the transaction which we afford to the dexterity of *Scapin* in the farce, or of a Barrington at the Old Bailey. But we cannot spare the names of P——y and B——k to ridicule or reproach; we would keep them, my Lord, if their noble owners will allow us, sacred to honour, to virtue, and their country.

Amid the venal levity of youthful pleasure and amusement, we must still imagine an ingenuous mind such as we know the P—— to possess, sometimes listening to more grave and dignified counsels. He cannot apply to persons more worthy of his confidence than your Grace and your associates; but the purity and dignity of your influence must be lost forever, if you allow it to degrade itself in offices so unworthy.

There is, on the other hand, a numerous circle of rank and fashion which looks to his example as a pattern for its conduct. Their imitation will be doubly sanctioned, if to his example they can add the authority of your acquiescence. Alas! the moles and specks of a fine portrait are easily copied by inferiour artists; but its beauties escape their pencil. Every young man can make a long dinner at Weltjie's, can embarrass his affairs, and borrow from usurers to redeem them; but it is in the ability of few to charm with the graces of manner and the flow of conversation; to inform their minds with classical knowledge, and to deliver that knowledge with easy and pointed elocution.

In certain elevated stations men cannot be forgotten of posterity.—Your illustrious friend, in the vivacity of the moment, may be thoughtless of what history shall say of him; your Grace, and your noble colleagues, in this transaction, are nearer the period when we anticipate its relation. Read again, my Lord, the instrument which has given occasion to this hasty letter, and say whether it is such a record as you would wish to descend to posterity; even as you would wish one of your distant successors to find, when he was seeking, with an honest pride, to blazon the achievements of his ancestors.

BRUTUS.

For The Port Folio.

THE SIGNORA AVEDUTA.

From the German and French.

(*Continued from page* 356.)

It was Thursday that we made this arrangement: Friday I began to wish that he might have nothing very dreadful in his appearance: Saturday I could not conceal from myself that if his appearance too widely differed from his voice, my sentiments for

him might not remain unchanged; and Sunday more dead than alive, I went to the church at which we had agreed to meet: it was sometime before I could summon courage to look towards the appointed spot—but what was my surprise when I did so, to behold, instead of the sort of figure I had dreaded to see, a man whose appearance surpassed any idea that my imagination had ever formed to itself of celestial beauty. So lost was I in amazement and admiration that when mass was over my companion could with difficulty tear me from the spot to which I seemed fixed.

Oh, most noble of mankind! cried I, (when in the evening I repaired to the rendezvous,) such modesty could alone complete your other perfections! my heart is yours forever,—he expressed his gratitude for the assurance, and told me that he was the Count Babbuino, and requested permission to ask me of my father in marriage, to which I consented without hesitation, and promised that I would never be any other's than his. The day he made his proposals, Count, said my father to him, your name and fortune are known to me; and I cannot but consider as a compliment your wishing to unite yourself with my family, but permit me to say, that I cannot dispose of my daughter's heart without consulting her: for however slight the importance that men generally attach to exteriour advantage, it is sometimes far otherwise with women. Oh, said the Count, I flatter myself I shall meet with no obstacles on that score: I wish it may be so, replied my father, endeavouring to conceal a smile, I will go for my daughter and we will leave it to her; *Aveduta*, said my father to me, Count Babbuino is come to ask you in marriage, and I have nothing to say against the alliance, unless it be that his person may not please you, it is my duty to prepare you for it, he is far from handsome.—Who, my father? cried I, much astonished, Count Babbuino not handsome! I have seen him, I have heard his name, and I am enchanted with him: so saying I gave my hand to my father, and he conducted me to the Count: Imagine to yourself my dismay at the sight of a figure unequalled by any from the pencil of Hogarth. This is not, this cannot be Count Babbuino, exclaimed I, or I must have taken some one else for him: What, replied the astonished Count, did you not see me at the third pillar at St. Charles's in blue and gold, as we had agreed on? I now recollect, replied I, that near the person whom I supposed to be Count Babbuino was an individual who was also in blue and gold, and to speak the truth, I concluded he was only placed there to serve as a foil to the Count; at this candid confession my admirer uttered an imprecation, and the name of Count Bellario escaped his lips, nor could he conceal from me that such was the name of the person I had mistaken for him. I do not know, continued the lady, if you ever remarked that in certain names there is a charm which prepossesses one instantaneously in favour of the person to whom it belongs. I had no sooner heard that of Bellario than I experienced the effects of it, and by an invincible sympathy I felt myself drawn towards him, thinking myself the more completely disengaged from my first promises as I had been mistaken both as to the name and person. In vain the poor Count employed his whole stock of eloquence, and embellished his discourse with all the flowers of rhetorick; he could not succeed in proving to me the superiority of mental over personal charms; when he had finished a speech worthy of being compared with the master pieces of antiquity, as uniting the precision of Demosthenes to the elegant abundance of Cicero; nowise convinced by his arguments, I calmly replied, When, Sir, I held to you a language not unlike what you now make use of. I had not seen the Count de Bellario; his merit is possibly as great as yours, and he possesses those personal advantages which have not fallen to your share: not knowing what to answer, the poor

Count withdrew, expressing by his air that he found himself obliged to give up all his hopes and abandon his projects. My father, who was present at this singular scene, was not a little amazed at it, and could not refrain from speaking of it to a confidential friend, who told it to others, until at last it reached the ears of Count Bellario. This drew his attention to me, he soon proposed himself and was accepted. Our union, however, was not a happy one; my husband was one of those men, who, satisfied with their external appearance, think that they need study only how to show themselves to advantage. His toilet employed the greater part of his time, and the remainder was devoted to practising airs and graces, in which he never failed of success.

Nobody entered a room better than he did, nobody knew better what politeness was, and nobody had a nobler or an easier air. He would have been the most charming man in the world in a company of deaf and dumb; but the inside of his head was far from corresponding with the outside. He could speak of nothing but of himself, of the success he had met with at various courts, of the compliments paid him, and all which he related as circumstantially as possible, and without appearing to have the least idea that we could be otherwise than highly entertained. Unfortunately, too for me, he thought he could not give me too much of his company. But his foolish vanity soon became disgusting to me, I began by thinking him ridiculous and then insupportable. Alas! thought I, one is poor indeed with such advantages only as he possesses. Ah, poor Babbuino, at least he had a lute and a voice! and I should already have become accustomed to his appearance.

I had not, however, been married more than a year, when death relieved me of my tiresome husband. The serenades and assiduities of Count Babbuino recommenced, and his love and constancy at last touched me; in short, we were married. But strange as you may think it, I soon found myself worse off than ever. To be sure my first husband was very tiresome and unamusing, but at least he did not torment me: perfectly satisfied with his own merit, and certain of obtaining his due share of admiration he was never out of humour; his pride had never been mortified, and he was exact with no one. Besides his vanity was of a very innocent sort, which is generally the case with men whose advantages are of a nature to attract at once the attention of the publick. They take no pains to ingratiate themselves into the favour of any one, to inspire anything like interest or affection, and thence it follows, that they are less apt to give rise to those envious and jealous feelings which interfere with the happiness of others. Count Babbuino was very differently situated, *his* disadvantages were such as to be apparent to every one, whilst the talent which gave him the power of rendering himself agreeable was of a nature not to be appreciated but by few. He was perpetually uneasy, lest the preponderance of his merit over his personal defects should not be acknowledged by the world in general. His vanity, easily alarmed, was ever on the watch, he was always in dread of some humiliation, and the least mortification affected him most sensibly; his own opinion of his merit was vague and variable, at one time he would angle for praise, and at another he would affect to reject it as being more than he deserved. It naturally followed that Envy (which is always excited by superiour attainments, and particularly when an individual is extremely desirous of displaying them) denied him the praise which was his due, and that degree of approbation which he was so ambitious of. You will not think it strange, that thus situated he should have been perpetually a prey to ill humour, that he should have envied those whose talents could come in competition with his own, and that he should have been too fre-

quently mortified at not receiving that exclusive and uninterrupted admiration which he thought himself entitled to, from those whom he thought had sufficient opportunities of knowing his merit: these passions he nourished in secret; nothing could extinguish a hatred he had once conceived, and he spared no trouble in procuring the means of revenging himself.

(To be continued.)

For The Port Folio.

CRITICISM.

Odes from the Norse and Welch tongues.

GRAY.

Fancy, obedient to their dread command,
With brilliant genius marshall'd forth his way;
They lur'd his steps to Cambria's once fam'd land,
And sleeping druids felt his magick lay.

ANON.

We are told by Mr. Mason of Mr. Gray, that

"The only work which he meditated upon with this direct view, (the Press) from the beginning, was a History of English Poetry, which he gave the world in the last edition of his poems. But the slight manner in which he there speaks of that design, may admit here of some additional explanation. Several years ago, I was indebted to the friendship of the present learned Bishop of Gloucester, for a curious manuscript paper of Mr. Pope's, which contains the first sketch of a plan for a work of this kind, which I have still in my possession. Mr. Gray was greatly struck with the method which Mr. Pope had traced out in this little sketch; and, on my proposal of engaging with him in compiling such a history, he examined the plan more accurately, enlarged it considerably, and formed an idea for an introduction to it. In this was to be ascertained the origin of rhyme: and specimens, not only of the Provençal Poetry (to which Mr. Pope seemed to have adverted,) but of the Scaldick, British and Saxon, were to have been given, as from all these different sources united, English Poetry had its original though it could hardly be called by that name before the time of Chaucer, with whose school (i. e. the poets who wrote in his manner) the history was to commence. The materials which I collected for this purpose are too inconsiderable to be mentioned; but Mr. Gray, besides versifying those odes that he published, made many elaborate disquisitions *into* [on] the origin of rhyme, and that variety of metre to be found in the writings of our ancient poets. He also transcribed many parts of the voluminous Lidgate, from the manuscripts which he found in the University Library, and those of the private colleges; remarking, as he went along, the several beauties and defects of this immediate scholar of Chaucer. He, however, soon found that a work of this kind, pursued on so very extensive a plan, would become almost endless; and hearing at the same time that Mr. Thomas Warton, Fellow of Trinity College, Oxford, (of whose abilities, from his observations on Spenser, we had each of us conceived the highest opinion) was engaged in a work of the same kind, we, by mutual consent, relinquished our undertaking; and soon after, on that gentleman's desiring a sight of the plan, Mr. Gray readily sent him a copy of it."

The *manuscript of Mr. Pope* has since been printed in the Gentle-

man's Magazine, for February, 1783, and may be seen in Dr. Anderson's edition of the British Poets, volume the tenth, *(Life of Gray)*. Some further account of the projected *history* is given in Mr. Roscoe's preface to his Life and Pontificate of Leo the Tenth. To this project we are indebted for the four odes, severally translations or imitations from the Norse and Welch tongues. Mr. Gray describes them as follows:

"*Pembroke Hall, Dec.* 24, 1787.

"They are imitations of two pieces of Norwegian poetry, in which there was a wild spirit that struck me."

And gives the following account of their publication; adding some remarks which we have thought proper to retain.

February 1, 1808.

"The sole reason I have to publish those few additions now, is to make up (in both) for the omission of that *Long Story;* and as to the notes, I do it out of spite, because the publick did not understand the two odes (which I have called Pindarick) though the first was not very dark, and the second alluded to a few common facts, to be found in the sixpenny history of England, by the way of question and answer, for the use of children. The parallel passages I insert out of justice to those writers from whom I happened to take the hint of any line, as far as I can recollect."

Dr. Johnson pronounces, that, "His translations of Northern and Welch poetry deserve praise; the imagery is preserved, perhaps improved; but the language is unlike the language of other poets.

Mr. Wakefield is more profuse in his praise: "These translations or imitations of the Norse and Welch Poetry are *instinct with fire* and poetical enthusiasm, and are, in all probability, such as Mr. Gray alone was capable of making them. But the poems themselves are not his own, and are therefore no proper subjects of critical observations. Whoever will be at the trouble of comparing them with the originals, will find that Mr. Gray has not only transfused their energy into his imitations, but tinctured them with the spirit of his own genius. They are in perfection—the *enthusiastick words—the words that burn*—of the Muses."

Our design, in bringing these poems before our readers, exclusively of that of collecting them as specimens of poetry of a peculiar genius, is that of *illustration;* with which view we shall present the poems themselves, accompanied by notes, and by Latin and English literal versions of the originals: a plan for which Mr. Mason's remark is a sufficient apology.

"Their best comment, since it is the best illustration of their excellency, will be to insert here the Latin versions of the originals whence they were taken; as it is probable that many readers who have hitherto admired them as compositions, have not compared them with those literal versions, for want of having the books, which are not common ones, at hand."

Who is he that pretends to the slightest knowledge of *Belles Lettres* and does not know the beauties—the excellence of Marmontel. His delightful tales—his Incas of Peru—indeed all that he has left to posterity is so interesting, so delightful, so

fascinating, and at the same time of such pure and forcible moral tendency, that his character as a writer is put beyond the reach of chance; and bids defiance to the ill-nature of criticism—If criticism itself with all its ruggedness could be ill-natured while contemplating Marmontel.—His Life written by himself bears in every feature of it the very same family stamp which characterises all his other charming writings; being simple, elegant, polished and interesting, and full of anecdote. Not the every day anecdote of the conundrum maker; but anecdote selected for its value in interesting the feelings, investigating the human heart, and affording instruction. From this work, which has been reprinted in America, we offer our readers an extract. It is taken rather by chance than by choice, and while it will amuse all, and may instruct some of our readers, will convey an idea of the writer's heart and understanding. It contains a fine reproof to inordinate vanity and saucy overbearing pride. To give the whole in detail would exceed the limits we allow to extracts, and therefore we have to state in explanation that Marmontel had got into a Coach on a journey, with a vain consequential young slip of nobility—a marquis, whose stupid impertinence so wrought upon even his (M.'s) temper that he was compelled to rebuke him severely.—— Take his own words.

"The first day, I gave him the back seat, and notwithstanding the sickness which the balancing of the carriage, and the motion backward occasioned me, I suffered the inconvenience. I even dissembled my disgust at hearing the most stupid of all spoiled children eternally displaying, with a puerile emphasis, his noble origin, his immense fortune, and the dignity of president, with which his father was invested. I let him boast of the beauty of his large blue eyes; and the charms of his face, with which, he innocently told me, all the women were in love. He talked to me of their lures, of their caresses, of the kisses they gave his fine eyes; I listened patiently, and said to myself: 'How ridiculous is vanity!'

"The next day, he got into the carriage first, and seated himself on the back seat. 'Softly, Marquis,' said I; 'in front, if you please. Today it is my turn to sit at my ease.' He answered that it was his place, and that his father had understood that he should occupy the back seat. I replied that, if his father had understood it in his bargain, I had not understood it in mine; and that, had he proposed it to me, I should not have cased myself up like a fool, in that dancing carriage; that I should now have been, for the same money, in the open air, upon a good horse, enjoying the scenery around me; that I had already been duped enough for having employed my five guineas so ill, and that I would not be so much so, as to give him constantly the best place. He persisted in keeping it; but, though he was as tall as I, I entreated him not to oblige me to force him from it, and to leave him in the road. He listened to this argument, and took the front seat. He was in ill humour till dinner time.—However, he contented himself with depriving me of his conversation; but, at dinner, his superiority recurred to him. They brought us a red-legged partridge. He thought himself an excellent carver; *quo gestu leporeo, et qua gallina secetur*. And indeed this exercise had made a part of his education. He took the partridge on his plate, cut off, very judiciously, the two wings and the two legs, kept the two wings for himself, and left me the legs and the back-bone. "What!" said I, "You like the wings of a partridge?" "Yes," said he "very well." "And I too," said I; and smiling; without discomposing myself, I established the equality. "You make very free," said he, "to take a wing from my plate!" "You are much more so," answered I, in a firm tone, "for having taken two from the dish." He was red with anger; but it subsided, and we dined peaceably.

The next day, "It is your turn," said I, "to take the back seat of the carriage." He seated himself there, saying, "you do me great favour:" and our *tete-a-tete* was going to be as silent as on the evening before, when an incident animated it. The marquis took snuff; I took it too, thanks to a young and pretty girl, who gave me a taste for it. In his sullen mood he opened his fine snuff-box, and I, who was not in ill humour, extended my hand, and took a pinch, as if we had been the best friends in the world. He did not refuse: and, after a few minutes reflection, "I must tell you," said he, "a circumstance that happened to M. de Maniban, first president of the parliament at Thoulouse. I foresaw it was something impertinent, and I listened. "M. de Maniban," continued he, "once gave audience, in his cabinet, to a *quidam*,

who had a cause, and who came to solicit his favour. The magistrate, as he listened, opened his snuff-box: the *quidam* took a pinch: the president did not discompose himself, but rang for his servant, and throwing away his snuff-box that the *quidam* had touched, he sent him for more." I avoided any appearance of applying this story to myself, and some little time afterward, when the coxcomb again displayed his box, I again took of his snuff as tranquilly as before. He looked surprised; and I, smiling said, "Why don't you ring, marquis?" "Here is no bell." "You are very fortunate that there is not," said I, "for the *quidam* would have drubbed you soundly for having rung." You may guess the astonishment that my reply created. He chose to be angry; and I was angry in my turn. "Be quiet," said I, "or I'll trample on you. I see that I have got a young fop to correct, and, from this moment, I will submit to no impertinence. Recollect that we are going to a city, where the son of a provincial president is nothing; and begin from this time to be simple, polite, and modest, if you can; for in the world, self-sufficiency, foppery, and foolish pride, will expose you to much more bitter vexations." While I spoke he concealed his eyes, and I saw he wept. I pitied him, and assumed the tone of a sincere friend: I made him reflect on his ridiculous boasting, on his puerile vanity, and his foolish pretensions; and I thought I perceived that his head became gradually less inflated with the vapours that filled it. "What can I do?" said he, "I have been brought up thus." To various marks of my kindness, I added the politeness of almost always giving him the best place in the carriage; for I was more accustomed than he to the inconvenience of riding backward; and this compliance completely reconciled us."

For The Port Folio.

POLITE LITERATURE.

Mr. Oldschool,

The judicious and learned remarks of Dr. Nesbit on the subject of classical learning, as they have appeared in The Port Folio, have given me pleasure, both because I think the subject worthy of illustration, and because the too prevalent prejudices of the day require something of the kind. How this kind of learning came to be cultivated so assiduously for two or three hundred years, and for so long to have been the characteristick of liberal improvement, supposing it to be nugatory, is a problem which I believe its adversaries would find it difficult to solve. Whatever people may alledge to favour their negligence or palliate their ignorance, there must have been some good reasons for the stress that has hitherto been laid upon the Latin and Greek languages in the education of youth, and of the acquisition of mental accomplishments.

Literature, the indispensable furniture of civilized life, has its origin, expansion, and various modifications; and a man who would form just notions of it should trace its progress, and by a tenacious observance of its essential properties, learn to taste the fountain in its remotest derivations. Our language, as well as several other of the most cultivated languages in Europe, owes much to the ancient languages of Greece and Rome; and to a scholar, the contemplation of those modern dialects as naturally suggests their classical original, as the branches of a tree indicate the root from which they sprung. Hence, if our own language, for instance, has either elegance or force, it will be very natural to attribute it to that immortal energy of expression; which not only exists in those ancient examples of fine writing, but by the transplantation of words, and by frequent imitations of style, has diffused itself through the genuine productions of modern literature. This being the case, I would ask whether literature with us ought not to embrace those languages, without which our own would, at this day, have been a jargon, grating to the ear, and unsatisfactory to the understanding?—Whether as it was first amplified and harmonized by those mother-tongues, it is not capable of receiving further improvement from them by frequent reference to their decision, in matters of grammar, style, and composition? Whether by totally neglecting those examples which have detained the muses in

our jarring world for so many ages, there would not be some danger of relapsing into barbarism? and finally, whether it is not as rational for a man that cultivates letters, either as a subject of philosophy or a matter of taste, to begin with the beginning, and in a manner to grow up with the language from its infancy, in the leading-strings of Latian lore, to its present vigour and maturity, as for a mathematician to begin with his axioms, or a natural philosopher with his laws of matter and motion?

I take it for granted that nature is right, and even when we cannot give a reason for her determinations, it would be unreasonable, not to say impious, to call them in question. On this ground we assert the importance of classical learning, and do not scruple to tell our Goths, that in attempting to abolish it they make war upon good sense, and, as far as in them lies, lay waste the fairest provinces of the intellectual world. I do not insist upon the custom of opening the scene of education with a Latin grammar; for bad customs sometimes become inveterate, and maintain themselves much longer than is either for the credit or advantage of mankind. But I say that a youth who loves letters, and is conscious of those fine feelings which vibrate to the accents of truth, and attach themselves to mental accommodations, regards the monuments of Grecian and Roman literature with a veneration, almost religious, and fondly anticipates a dignified satisfaction in an immediate acquaintance with them. The secrecy in which they are withdrawn from vulgar notice has something sacred in it, and an intimacy with them is rated the higher, as being the privilege only of those bouyant spirits, who, in the ardour of literary ambition, mount to those heights of enlightened antiquity, when the native effusions of genius savoured strongly of inspiration. The very consciousness of such an ambition implies an affinity to those fathers of literature, that not only sanctions his undertaking, but kindles within his breast an enthusiasm that treads on classick ground, that listens to the Orphean lyre, and bows with grateful homage to the ancient muse.

It seems they have, many ages before he drew his breath, provided for his improvement and his happiness, and thereby bespoke his veneration and filial attachment; and he gladly recognizes the claim, and generously resolves that the lapse of time and the difference of language shall, in proportion to the difficulty which they throw in his way, prove the sincerity with which he cultivates it. Distance of time, like distance of place, gives a softness and solemnity to objects naturally great, which leave a great deal to the imagination, and dispose us to expect more than common pleasure in an immediate access to them; and so the remoteness of ancient authours, and even their obscurity, has charms to the real student.

The shade of departed friends often recurs to the imagination, and sometimes, as has been supposed, to the sight of their survivors.

The attachments seem immortal, and dissolution strangely enhances the endearment: And may we not imagine that something of the same kind takes place between living genius and those distinguished characters, who at a great distance of time have held the lamp of science to a benighted world? The ardour with which their works are studied not only excites admiration, but a sort of affection which is fain to try itself in all the attitudes of personal intercourse, however visionary. Hence an unwearied application to whatever might assist the conception of their sentiments and character, and even their voice and features.

I dont know whether I shall have the assent of very general experience, but to me, the use of a language no longer spoken has pleasures of a singular and an enchanting nature. The perception of meaning, by certain ar-

tificial combinations of figures or letters, independently of sound, is a sort of deciphering that calls forth a variety of ingenious effort, and continually repays the pains of investigation, by discoveries the most entertaining and interesting to an inquisitive mind. I cant help reflecting upon the wonderful contrivance whereby ideas are perpetuated; whereby a piece of manufacture that we call a book, becomes the faithful depository of intellectual treasures, amassed many ages ago, and retaining the distinctive characters of their several authours; more especially am I disposed to admire their unperishable excellence, when I recollect, that they emerged to celebrity after a long deathlike oblivion during the dark ages, like some rivers, which sink, and after pursuing their viewless course for many a league, burst forth anew, to perpetuate their name and their usefulness, until lost in the sea.

Should I be proud of an intimacy with persons of high station, and very dignified character? However my fortune might be advanced by such an accident, I should not hesitate to prefer the privilege of listening to the sages of antiquity, and imbibing their sentiments, as conceived and expressed by themselves, to the most flattering partiality of a contemporary, however great he might be: and, although my wishes might never be gratified, an enthusiasm of this sort has been the exciting cause of so much literary excellence, in numberless instances, that an extinction of it would augur very unfavourably to learning in general. To conclude:

The classical writers of antiquity have so large a share in modern compositions of any real merit, that even those who either cannot, or will not read them, ought to feel themselves under obligations to them for those very works whereby they would have them superseded. This conduct in a man of letters is ungrateful, at the same time that we could not excuse it in any others, but in consideration of what they themselves would think still more opprobrious; for the most of men would more patiently suffer their moral principles to be called in question than their understandings.

M. L.

PORTRAIT PAINTING.

"Whoever is delighted with his own picture, cannot derive his pleasure from that of another. Every man is always present to himself, and has, therefore, little need of his own remembrance*, nor can desire it, but for the sake of those whom he loves, and by whom he hopes to be remembered. This use of the art is a natural and reasonable consequence of affection; and though like other human actions, it is often complicated with pride; yet, even such pride is more laudable than that by which palaces are covered with pictures, which, however excellent, neither imply the owner's virtue nor promote it."

* Which he can always find in a mirror.

ORIGINAL POETRY.

For The Port Folio.

MR. OLDSCHOOL,

Whether I am seized with a confirmed cacöethes scribendi, or only infected with a gentle metro-mania, or whether these disorders materially differ; or whether there are any such, I leave it you to decide. I state my case thus: My poetical temperament had subsided to a peaceful sort of blank-verse humour, and I was gently rocking myself to sleep, with some dozen of the milk and water strains of *Haley*, when your paper of——I forget the date—was brought in by a friend, and upon opening it the "Imitation of the 16th Ode of Anacreon," that I sent you some weeks since, stared me full in the face. I always had, from a stripling, a natural love of seeing myself in print; and whether I scribbled son-

nets for the young ladies, or advertisements for the barber in the village newspaper, I always, as I said before, felt a kind of congratulatory palpitation on reading them over, which I hardly ever failed to do, by the time they were in proof sheet. But to come to the point, I caught up the paper and read over the imitation once or twice, with the most profound admiration; but whether of you, or of myself, I foresee our mutual modesty will not let us agree upon—— Though, to say the truth, Mr. Old-school, I felt my gratitude not a little excited by your condescension in printing me; the result is, a violent poetical furor seized me: after the first paroxysms of which, had subsided, and I had written myself down into a gentle pastoral disposition, I produced the following

Translation of the 19th Carmen of Horace.

TO LYDIA.

Dialogue between Horace and Lydia.

HORACE.

While Lydia's bosom beat for me,
Nor any other youthful he
Had dared his ardent arms entwine
About that snowy neck of thine,
Then happier I—more sweetly blest—

LYDIA.

Prithee, rest:
Before your heart inconstant stray'd,
And Chloe lov'd—the Cretan maid:
And Lydia left—for Chloe's fame,
(Lydia, of no ignoble name!)
Then Lydia's bosom beat for thee,
Nor sigh'd for other youthful he.

HORACE.

But Cretan Chloe's charms inspire!
Sweet mistress of the trembling lyre!
'Tis she who chants the witching strains
That softly sooth us from the plains,
Ye gods! how willing would I die,
On her sweet breast to heave one sigh!

LYDIA.

Calais, blooming Thurian boy,
Oft woo's me to the nuptial joy:
Son of Ornithus—and in sooth,
My eye ne'er view'd a sweeter youth:
Fates! every other bliss destroy
Ere harm my blooming Thurian boy!

HORACE.

Oh Lydia! gentle Lydia! list!
And turn on me, those eyes I've kiss't,
What if my vagrant heart returns,
And kindlier constant for thee burns?
And Hymen in his rosy bands
(As Love our hearts) shall bind our hands,
And Chloe's love and Chloe's charms
Are all forsaken for thy arms?

LYDIA.

Though brighter than the glittering star
That twinkles in the west afar,
Were Calais' charms; and you more light
And fickle than the birds of flight:
And your temper more erratick
Than the blust'ring Adriatick:
In your arms I'd happier lie,
And sweetly live and sweetly die!

Portland, April 8.

Forgive, dear sir, the folio of rhotomontade at the beginning of this translation, and view this production with the same kindness you exerted towards my other piece; but if with all the allowances you can make, or fancy, for a younker who has just "'gan bathe his baby quill" in the rills of Helicon, a modest youth withal:—if with all these you find the lines inadmissable, just turn the leaf and kindly write the epitaph of my poetical life—somehow thus:

Hic jacet—G. Scriblerus—born in the sunshine of the P. F. of March 1808, and criticised to death by the Editor thereof on the April succeeding—as the fire kindles, have mercy on his remains!!

Epitaph, on William Shaw, an Attorney.

Here lies *William Shaw*,
An attorney at law;
If he is not blest,
What will become of all the rest?

vid p. 320

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